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PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

The present document reports on and analyses major new trends and developments in UNICEF programme cooperation in the Eastern and Southern Africa region during 1991.

The UNICEF regional office has responsibility for UNICEF cooperation in the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Somalia, Swaziland, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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I. REGIONAL OVERVIEW

1. Annual growth rates of gross national product (GNP) per capita remained negative for most countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region during 1990. Debt service continued to consume significant percentages of export earnings, while external resource flows to the region remained disappointing. The prices of the countries' main export commodities continued to fall, while those of their main imports continued to rise. At the same time, growing unemployment and falling per capita consumption continued to accompany a sharp decline in social spending, indicating that the number of poor will continue to increase.

2. Political developments have been both encouraging and disappointing. The peace in Angola was encouraging, as were the democratic elections in Zambia, South Africa's progress towards majority government and the winding down of South Africa's destabilization programme in southern Africa. However, many conflicts continued to plague the region. Banditry still disrupts the delivery of social services in Mozambique and Rwanda. The struggle for greater democratization has caused political instability in Madagascar. In Ethiopia and Somalia, civil war disrupted services, destroyed infrastructure and killed and dislocated many millions of people.

II. PROGRAMMES

A. Health

3. By September 1991, 12 countries (Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) had met the universal child immunization (UCI) target of 75 per cent coverage for three doses of combined diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine (DPT3) for infants, with the coverage for the region as a whole standing at 81 per cent for anti-tuberculosis vaccine, 67 per cent for DPT3 and 60 per cent for measles vaccine. Unfortunately, national UCI is still several years away in Madagascar and in the war-affected countries of Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia and Uganda, where UCI achievements have been limited to capital cities and other accessible populations. In addition, coverage of two doses of tetanus toxoid vaccine for pregnant women seems to have stagnated. As economies weaken further and as donor and political commitment to UCI declines, sustaining coverage levels will present an enormous challenge for the future.

4. National programmes for the control of diarrhoeal diseases (CDD) exist in all countries in the region, but results have suffered because of poor health education, low training coverage, inadequate case management and unreliable, but improved, supplies of oral rehydration salts (ORS) sachets. Few programmes focus on the management of chronic diarrhoea, a major health problem in the region, and few include long-term preparations for a cholera outbreak, which partly explains a cholera fatality rate in Zambia that is 15 times higher than in Peru.

5. It is estimated that fewer than 40 per cent of countries in the region have operational national programmes for the control of acute respiratory infections (ARIs) and that fewer than 12 per cent of childhood pneumonia cases are properly treated with effective and inexpensive antibiotics.

6. Several countries (Malawi, Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe) are developing or improving national anti-malaria programmes, although some of the most heavily affected (Kenya and Uganda) have not yet made major interventions. Programmes include improving diagnosis, treatment and access to treatment; retarding parasite transmission; promoting malaria-focused information; and managing the environment in order to control mosquito breeding.

7. Current national estimates of the incidence of human immune deficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) range from 2.2 per cent in Botswana to more than 9 per cent in Malawi and Uganda, where AIDS is the leading cause of adult deaths. Most countries have established programmes for disseminating correct information about HIV/AIDS and helping people (especially teenagers) to protect themselves from HIV transmission. This is typically the focus of UNICEF assistance. In addition, Malawi and Uganda are promoting safe blood transfusions and Kenya is focusing on care and counselling for HIV carriers and their families.

8. With UNICEF assistance, many countries are developing safe motherhood practices. In some countries, the distribution of anti-malaria drugs, anti-anaemia drugs, maternal and child health (MCH) kits and kits for trained birth attendants is supplementing routine MCH training programmes. None the less, few countries have effectively linked safe motherhood initiatives with programmes to empower women and improve their general health and nutrition levels.

9. The principles of the Bamako Initiative are being incorporated into the primary health care (PHC) programmes of most countries in the region. In Burundi and Kenya, decentralization has been implemented in selected locations where planning and spending originate from community health committees. Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland have initiated cost-recovery through the introduction of user fees, while Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia have established national formularies for essential drugs. Preliminary reports from the evaluation of the initiative by the Overseas Development Administration (United Kingdom) in Burundi, Kenya and Uganda are very encouraging.

B. Household food security and nutrition

10. In the past year the new UNICEF nutrition strategy has been actively promoted. At least five countries have developed programmes for achieving the global nutrition goals and six have created innovative area-based programmes with a nutritional impact. There has also been progress in improving nutrition surveillance systems in eight countries.

11. In seven countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania), post-natal malnutrition exceeds 30 per cent. Intra-uterine malnutrition - reflecting maternal nutrition levels - ranges from 14 to 17 per cent in seven countries and reached 20 per cent in Malawi and Mozambique. Moreover, chronic malnutrition affected more than 55 per cent of children under five years of age in Burundi, Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique, which recorded some of the highest figures in the world.

12. All but eight countries reported declines in their average annual harvests of food crops this season, with Angola, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Somalia and, for the first time, Zimbabwe reporting large declines, creating high risks of food shortages. Emergency food and nutrition programmes are still needed in Angola and Mozambique, while in Ethiopia and Somalia only a massive international relief programme will be able to avert widespread famine in 1992.

13. Many countries have initiated iodine deficiency disorder control programmes, with actions varying from assessment of prevalence to programme implementation (with iodine oil distribution in Mozambique and salt iodization in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe). The few countries with vitamin A deficiency control programmes continue to favour the distribution of capsules over the regular ingestion of local foods rich in vitamin A. Iron-deficiency anaemia remains relatively neglected.

C. Water supply and sanitation

14. UNICEF assistance to national programmes for constructing, maintaining and rehabilitating water supplies uniformly emphasizes low-cost technologies (hand-pumps, spring protection, water-catchment tanks) that can be maintained with local skills and materials. The achievement of construction targets ranges from below 50 per cent (in countries with emergency programmes) to over 90 per cent (Uganda). Since water supply projects are often part of area-based programmes, as in Kenya, Malawi, Namibia and Uganda, they generally enjoy high levels of community funding. In most countries, UNICEF-assisted sanitation programmes are moving away from exclusive preoccupation with ventilated improved pit latrines to increased emphasis on hygiene training and education.

D. Basic education and early childhood development

15. The representatives' consultation on education for all and the regional education for all training workshop trained UNICEF officers in programming for basic education. In Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, round-table discussions focused on identifying educational priorities, mobilizing partners and obtaining external resources. Several countries are experimenting with community-based programmes: Swaziland has translated Facts for Life into measurable learning units; Kenya has developed alternative venues and curricula for educating street children; and Botswana and Lesotho

have done the same for herdboys and female primary-school drop-outs respectively.

16. Cost-effective programmes for improving early childhood care and development are also being initiated. Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe are educating caregivers to inculcate responsible attitudes and to enhance the use of service programmes. Botswana has initiated a child-to-child programme and Kenya has introduced early childhood programmes into its Koranic schools. The regional office has analysed and documented innovative and replicable programmes. In addition, networks on basic education and early childhood care and development have been established.

E. Women's development

17. Although girls do not seem to suffer large disparities in health and nutrition compared to boys, girls are valued less, receive less food (and less nourishing food), suffer more harmful traditional practices and have a heavier workload and fewer educational opportunities. Several country offices are beginning to address these issues, mostly by collecting gender-disaggregated data to bridge information gaps.

18. Many country offices are supporting women's economic activities directly or indirectly by undertaking feasibility studies, supporting day-care centres or promoting women's participation in community programmes. Two countries (Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania) have developed savings and credit schemes. Others are supporting women's income-generating activities in the context of household food security (Lesotho, Mauritius and Namibia) or as part of an area-based programme (Mozambique, Namibia and United Republic of Tanzania).

19. Health services for girls and women are found chiefly in safe motherhood, family planning and MCH initiatives. Education programmes are less common, with Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe reporting some progress. Excepting Namibia and Mauritius, few programmes specifically address the problems of girls and women in difficult circumstances, even though many offices report that prostitution and teenage pregnancy resulting in school drop-outs are common problems.

F. Monitoring and evaluation

20. Monitoring the global goals for children in the 1990s and supporting Governments in developing and implementing national programmes of action has become a critical UNICEF concern. All countries in the region are developing such programmes and Namibia was the first to finalize one. Several countries have adopted additional goals reflecting national priorities (e.g. controlling AIDS and malaria) and several expect to set some achievement targets beyond the year 2000 because of low baselines, high resource requirements and, in

several cases, the impact of AIDS and malaria. A key constraint to monitoring the goals remains the lack of reliable baseline data.

G. Emergencies

21. Emergency conditions persist in Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Somalia. In Angola, at peace since May 1991, UNICEF is providing essential relief materials, helping to regenerate agricultural production and strengthening the capacity of its principal operational partner, the State Secretariat for Social Affairs, to receive, store and distribute emergency relief supplies. In Mozambique, UNICEF has played a key role in the United Nations post-war support and drought relief assistance programmes. In Ethiopia, it is providing medical and water supply relief to 6 million children and women in former conflict- and drought-affected areas to large numbers of displaced persons in Addis Ababa and to thousands of demobilized soldiers and their dependants. In Somalia, where 2.5 million children and women are affected by the civil war, the evacuation of UNICEF international staff to Nairobi and the looting of every UNICEF office but one has necessitated routing emergency relief supplies through Djibouti and Mombasa for distribution by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The newly established Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa, with staff seconded from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), now coordinates inter-agency programmes responding to emergencies in that subregion.

H. Policy Monitoring Unit

22. The Policy Monitoring Unit monitors the changes taking place in the southern African subregion as a result of political changes in South Africa, assesses their implications for women and children and recommends actions to UNICEF decision makers. Its four publications include a monthly analysis of developments in South Africa and a semi-annual report on trends in the southern African subregion. The Unit also undertakes programme-related research in areas having a wider regional interest (e.g., a UCI cost-reduction study in the United Republic of Tanzania). Finally, it has provided technical support to a group of South African democratic and non-racial NGOs preparing a situation analysis on children and women in South Africa.

III. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

23. Eighteen Governments participated in the World Summit for Children, 13 have signed the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action and 12 have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Mozambique, Namibia and the United Republic of Tanzania have tried to integrate the Convention into national law. Since 1989, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has adopted 12 resolutions that relate to children and are, therefore, of interest to UNICEF,

as well as a resolution on organizing a donor conference for African children late in 1992. With two exceptions, all countries in the region celebrated the Day of the African Child. Many heads of State used the occasion to publicize the Convention and the Summit and to pledge themselves to include the needs of children among national development priorities.

24. The annual Information and Education for Development Workshop of the National Committees for UNICEF, the first such meeting to be held in Africa, improved understanding between UNICEF field offices and National Committees and demonstrated the Committees' priority commitment to Africa.

25. Several country offices reported extensive collaboration with religious groups. The All Africa Conference of Churches has collaborated with UNICEF to prepare a Christian education study kit outlining the theological basis of child survival, protection and development to enable preachers to address such issues. The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa and the Interregional Meetings of Bishops of Southern Africa are collaborating with UNICEF to prepare for the 1994 Bishops' Synod. UNICEF is also supporting a symposium with Islamic leaders on child survival, protection and development, to be held in 1992.

IV. PROGRAMME AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

26. Six UNICEF regional networks met in the past year. The HIV/AIDS network discussed the needs of children in AIDS-affected families, focusing on infants born with HIV, AIDS orphans and street children. The malaria network discussed various control strategies, including the provision of anti-malaria drugs and the reduction of parasite transmission through the use of bed-nets, insect repellents and vector control. The household food security and nutrition network held an intensive training workshop concerning the new UNICEF nutrition strategy and then met again to solve problems encountered in implementing the strategy at the country level. The women's development network made a first attempt to link in a practical way the policy, programme and training components of overall UNICEF concerns with issues of women and development. The network focusing on adjustment with a human face and the financing of services examined the problem of external debt as well as country experiences with programmes designed to mitigate the negative impact of adjustment. Finally, the management information systems network met twice to implement plans for improving electronic data-processing (EDP) systems, focusing on the enhanced global field support services package that was scheduled for release in January 1992.

27. A nearly completed regional analysis of area-based programmes in seven countries shows that multifocal, officer-supported and community-based programmes that balance economic and social sector projects are most likely to be successful. A study on community participation reviewed the effectiveness of a wide range of community-based organizations such as women's groups, welfare societies, agricultural cooperatives and savings and credit associations in eight countries and will conclude with a regional report and a

workshop. Cost-analysis studies of Kenya's community-based programmes, Somalia's essential drugs programme and Zambia's UCI programme have been completed. A paper analysing different credit and savings programmes for women has been published and distributed to country offices. Locally prepared case studies of internally displaced children in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Somalia served as key inputs to a regional report on displaced children. There are two studies on the use of home fluids for the management of diarrhoea: an ongoing study involving burnt rice water, a home fluid incorporated into Madagascar's CDD programme; and a completed study involving the use of coconut water for rehydration in Comoros and of water and coconut pulp for feeding in Madagascar. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are participating in a study of gender perspectives of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, aiming to identify priority areas for advocacy for reformation of the legal system. The Educational Research Network of Eastern and Southern Africa and the African Women's Communication and Development Network are preparing a study of the girl-child and disparities in education based on a general situation analysis involving eight countries and on detailed case studies from Botswana, Kenya and Madagascar. Finally, eight countries are participating in a household food security study which aims to stimulate sensitization and to mobilize resources for addressing that problem in each participating country.

28. In 1991, there were 11 training workshops at the regional and subregional levels in the following areas: education for all; programme processes; social mobilization; participatory development; training for trainers; and programme information management systems.

V. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

29. In addition to straining staff both physically and psychologically, political instability in many countries has limited the ability of many offices to assess country situations fully and to adopt meaningful country priorities. It remains difficult to recruit international Professional staff for assignment to countries affected by internal conflict such as Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia.

30. Five country offices, the Regional Office and the Nairobi office of Operation Lifeline Sudan were audited in 1991, and in general their operations were judged to be satisfactory. Supply operations in the region are in fairly good order, given the number of countries under emergency conditions, but some country offices need to strengthen their capacities in this area. The Regional Office contributed 397 person days of support in programme development as well as management and operations to country offices during the period under review.

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PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

The present document reports on and analyses major new trends and developments of UNICEF programme cooperation in the West and Central Africa region during 1991.

The UNICEF regional office has the responsibility for UNICEF cooperation in the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zaire.

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INTRODUCTION

1. During the past year, a growing number of countries in the West and Central African region embarked upon the road to democratization. This process was the result of both growing demands by the educated élite for power sharing and pressures from the population at large. National conferences, proclaiming full sovereignty, were held in the Congo, Gabon, the Niger and Togo. Prime ministers were appointed in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Congo, the Niger, Togo and Zaire. Free presidential elections were held in Benin and Cape Verde, with opposition candidates scoring major victories. For the first time, new constitutions are referring to children's rights in Benin, Cape Verde, Guinea and Sierra Leone. However, the situation remains uncertain in, inter alia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and Zaire.

2. Part of the region's political and social instability can be traced to Africa's continuing poor economic performance. Commodity prices, the continent's major source of foreign exchange, continue to be depressed. In spite of debt reduction and rescheduling, debt servicing continues to impose a heavy burden. Most Governments are also in arrears on payments to national businesses and industries. In this adverse economic climate, social service infrastructures have deteriorated seriously.

3. The situation in Liberia appeared hopeful with the initiation of the Yamoussoukro peace summits, which set the stage for a comprehensive settlement between the warring factions. However, the situation on the ground did not improve. Following skirmishes on the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone, thousands of Sierra Leonians became displaced and a large number fled to neighbouring Guinea. The sizeable refugee populations in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone continue to weigh heavily on the social service infrastructure and on the local economy in the border areas. UNICEF emergency relief activities in Liberia focused on a wide range of sustenance and rehabilitation projects in the areas of water supply, health, nutrition and children in especially difficult circumstances. In the neighbouring host countries, UNICEF continues to provide essential emergency relief assistance.

4. UNICEF and the African Development Bank agreed on operational modalities of cooperation, particularly a cost-sharing arrangement for joint project identification and assessment. The agreement has set the stage for closer cooperation benefiting children and women in the region.

5. In accordance with article 34 of the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children, most countries of the region have set up mechanisms to elaborate national programmes of action. In a related development, the Organization of African Unity summit held at Abuja, Nigeria, called for a donors' conference on the African child to mobilize support for the implementation of the Summit Plan of Action. The conference is planned for late 1992.

I. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

6. In the area of primary health care (PHC), the strategic approach of the Bamako Initiative is beginning to be applied firmly in a number a countries, with national capacity-building being strengthened at both national and district levels. Benefiting from structures of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) built up over a period of several years, PHC systems are being developed more quickly, also facilitating gradual integration of EPI.

7. Results from coverage surveys in 19 countries show that universal child immunization has been achieved in seven countries of the region. Region-wide, coverage by antigen of children under one year of age exceeded 50 per cent. Tetanus toxoid coverage has also increased to the same level. The emergence of five doses of the same vaccine for women in coverage surveys in a number of countries is also an encouraging development. Greater attention is now being devoted to efficiency issues so as to ensure sustainability; a number of subregional workshops are being held to focus on these issues. To monitor EPI-related goals for the 1990s, surveillance is becoming a major priority.

8. While working towards the sustainability of EPI gains, health programmes are also paying greater attention to the region's main killer diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections (ARI) and malaria. The control of diarrhoeal diseases (CDD), which to date has been limited mostly to the distribution of oral rehydration salts, is now being expanded to take a more holistic approach, focusing on correct case management, breast-feeding and water supply and sanitation. Outbreaks of cholera in Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana and Nigeria further exposed the need for improved CDD and increased international coordination. ARI interventions are still modest, consisting mostly of the provision of essential drugs. In the Gambia, home-based case management - still a major problem - is being analysed to provide guidance to other countries in the region. In the fight against malaria, interesting experiments with impregnated bed-net programmes are being carried out in the Gambia, the Niger and Sierra Leone.

9. With the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) threatening the substantial gains made in mortality reduction, new impetus has been given to fighting the disease in the region. In several countries, including Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Sierra Leone and Zaire, UNICEF supports the production of information materials and communication activities. In Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali, activities will be reoriented so as to target the most vulnerable groups, using a risk-reduction approach. Several countries are planning increased support to AIDS orphans.

10. In the interest of national capacity-building, UNICEF has increased its support to regional training and information exchanges. Participation in joint World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF technical group meetings has become a matter of routine. UNICEF participated in the regional preparatory meeting for the Global Ministerial Conference on Malaria which will take place in the Netherlands in 1992.

11. Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Nigeria were selected to launch the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative in the region. In Nigeria, the Ministry of Health has enthusiastically accepted the initiative as a key element of nutrition support and maternal and child health care. In Côte d'Ivoire, four hospitals were selected in the main urban areas. In Gabon, a highly urbanized country with a major hospital structure, the initiative is expected to have a strong impact.

12. In collaboration with WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF is developing a community-based nutrition surveillance system, which should generate basic food and nutrition data. Because of climatic conditions and mounting demographic pressures, UNICEF increased its support to food security programmes. In countries such as Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger, community surveillance systems are being encouraged.

13. Most countries in the region are now linking water supply and sanitation with other sectors. Programmes for the eradication of dracunculiasis (guinea worm disease) are on course, with progress reported in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria. In the area of sanitation, UNICEF support is focusing on hygiene education and latrine construction in rural areas. However, because programme results are not meeting set targets, a review of the current strategy is needed in terms of target groups, localities and community participation.

14. Since the World Conference on Education of All, and after a number of round tables in Cape Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Togo, the development of education programmes was stepped up throughout the region. UNICEF support was directed primarily towards early childhood, non-formal and formal primary education. As the education sector becomes a major component of UNICEF-assisted programmes, there will be a need to hire more qualified professional staff to guide the process in Africa.

15. There is an increasing awareness in Africa of the plight of children in especially difficult circumstances. A number of major studies in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Zaire are expected to lead to broad-based interventions on behalf of such children. In Liberia, UNICEF is helping children traumatized by the civil conflict through counselling and vocational training, and is uniting them with their families and communities. UNICEF will continue to advocate that Governments address the underlying causes of the problem.

16. In 1991, a series of regional meetings were held to analyse the impact of current programmes on women. The situation of African women could improve if their true productive role were taken into account. Several country offices have begun to collect gender-disaggregated data on girl children, whose situation requires particular attention because of their high vulnerability and poor chances for education.

II. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

17. External relations activities were geared to a large extent towards follow-up to the World Summit for Children. The first celebration of the Day of the African Child, in June 1991, reminded leaders of the promises made to children. Alliance-building continued: UNICEF took an active part in both the Francophone and the Organization of the Islamic Conference summits, each of which adopted resolutions in support of child survival, protection and development; a good number of African non-governmental organizations (NGOs), participating in the NGO Forum held in Zimbabwe, reconfirmed their commitment to the Summit Plan of Action.

18. In collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University (United States), communications training was provided to government counterparts and UNICEF staff from the Central African Republic, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali and Zaire. Communication strategies in support of breast-feeding promotion (Gabon) and the Bamako Initiative (Guinea) were developed as models for use in other countries in the region.

19. Ghana, Nigeria and Togo produced national language versions of Facts for Life, increasing the outreach of simple health messages. In cooperation with selected rural radio producers, FAO and other donors, UNICEF contributed to the development of a communication strategy for rural radio communicators.

20. The regional office provided support to Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Senegal and Sierra Leone for the production of information kits designed for fund-raising purposes. In the context of the Liberian emergency, a press kit was produced as part of the overall UNICEF media strategy developed for the country. In addition, two television spots were produced focusing on girls' education and street children.

21. Advocacy for children with film-makers was concentrated around the biennial Festival Pan Africain du Cinéma de Ouagadougou (Ouagadougou Pan African Film Festival) in Burkina Faso, which devoted one day to discussions on how the African film medium could contribute to raising awareness on the situation of children. Benin, the Central African Republic, the Congo and Gabon strengthened their cooperation with selected artists and intellectuals. The popular singer, Youssou N'dour, from Senegal, was named UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for the performing arts to help strengthen advocacy with youth groups in the region.

22. With a few exceptions, most countries of the region registered increases in greeting card sales, with the Niger leading with a rise of 58 per cent.

III. OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

23. As a result of increased political instability and civil unrest in the region, security has become a major concern of field offices. UNICEF staff in Zaire were temporarily evacuated in November. A regional administration/personnel workshop had to be postponed following political unrest in the host country, Togo.

24. Working conditions of local staff improved over the last year. Salary surveys were held in several countries and salary increases ranging from 5 to 115 per cent were approved to compensate for loss of purchasing power caused by inflation.

25. The Liberia and Togo offices became full country offices with the arrival of their respective representatives in July.

26. Regional training activities were organized in the areas of programming, monitoring and evaluation and nutrition. Trained staff are starting to assume the role of trainers in their respective country offices and at the subregional level.

27. Discussions are continuing with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on establishing common office premises in Benin, Togo and Zaire.

28. To improve the management of UNICEF resources in support of country goals, the development of management information systems began with the filling of the electronic data processing officer post in the regional office and the recruitment of subregional focal points. This team will assist country offices in computer systems development, computer training and hardware maintenance and upgrading.

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PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN REGION

The present document reports on and analyses major new trends and developments in UNICEF programme cooperation in the Americas and Caribbean region during 1991.

The UNICEF Regional Office has responsibility for cooperation in the following countries and Territories: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Uruguay and Venezuela.

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I. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

A. Economic, political and social challenges

1. In the Americas and the Caribbean, the 1991 per capita gross national product (GNP) increased by approximately 0.4 per cent, the highest increase in four years. The average inflation rate in 1991 dropped to 300 per cent, a significant reduction over the previous two years, but a serious burden none the less for the most disadvantaged sectors of the population.

2. Interest rates have fallen and external debts have been rescheduled. However, region-wide, the average ratio of interest paid to export income is estimated at 23 per cent, still far too high. In addition, employment figures for April to July 1991 in 7 countries, which represent 77 per cent of the region's population, showed an increase in unemployment over the previous year.

3. Stability is being achieved in the region as a result of democratization and significant steps towards peace in Central America. Those processes made progress in the context of new cooperative agreements in the Caribbean, Central America, the Southern Cone and in the Andean countries. Nevertheless, the increasing magnitude of poverty in the region - 270 million persons - threatens the political gains and represents an important factor in social instability.

4. The long-lasting and deeply-rooted economic crisis in the Americas and the Caribbean has forced several countries to adopt stabilization and adjustment schemes that have caused considerable hardship, especially among the most vulnerable groups. In spite of this, there have been two favourable developments: the creation by Governments of mechanisms aimed at compensating the costs of adjustment and the return to more favourable conditions that increase social investment through renewed national efforts, new external loans and debt relief for children.

5. Frequent themes in the new political agendas in the region include expanded dialogue, cooperative arrangements of various sorts and a move towards pluralism and increased participation. Such issues as armed conflict, border-related problems, the common interests of various groups of countries and the plight of neglected populations are now being debated.

6. The resulting climate has provided opportunities to achieve significant progress towards the survival, protection and development of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 25 countries in the region. Consequently, these countries are adapting their legislation, and, in the case of Colombia, major constitutional reforms have been undertaken in which children's rights are gaining recognition.

7. The efforts of UNICEF representatives, frequent visits of the Executive Director and his meetings with heads of State and national and public opinion leaders have made it possible to advance the causes of children and women and

strengthen their stature in the overall economic, social and political agendas of the countries of the Americas and the Caribbean.

B. Emerging trends

8. Many countries of the region have already launched national programmes of action and others will do so in the near future. In this context, the issues of continuity, linkage, implementation, monitoring and resource allocation are the main challenges. Advocacy must be continued to maintain the required levels of political, institutional and public support to transform country programme plans into action and to assess where and how UNICEF inputs can be used to greatest advantage. These topics were given special consideration in formulating the 12 country programmes prepared for the 1992 Executive Board session.

9. The ability of the UNICEF Regional Office and country offices to respond to the challenges of the World Summit for Children allowed countries in the region to take advantage of several political opportunities. A case in point is the Ibero-American Summit, comprising 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries, plus Portugal and Spain. These countries held their first annual meeting in Mexico in June 1991, during which they issued the Guadalajara Declaration. It emphasizes the importance that the Ibero-American heads of State attach to national programmes of action. Similar discussions were held in the Rio Group (13 countries) in Cartagena, Colombia, in December 1991, at the Central American Summit for Human Development, Children and Youth in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, also in December, and among Andean and Caribbean countries.

10. Groups of forgotten and marginal persons are receiving increased attention and there is a new drive to defend their rights. This is evident in the case of indigenous groups, persons of African origin, girl-children, children of the Amazon and children acting on their own behalf, as in the case of those attending the Caribbean Summit for Children in Barbados and children who took part in a referendum in Ecuador to ascertain the most important aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this context, the region is developing several activities to maximize benefits for children in the upcoming International Year of the Family, 1994.

11. Operational arrangements involving other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector institutions took place in 1991. As a result, a closer relationship was developed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the context of the preparation and celebration of the Central American Summit for Human Development, Children and Youth. A wider technical relationship was developed with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to support countries in processing national household surveys and sectoral data and to monitor the goals for children.

12. Programmes of debt relief for children were approved in 1991 in Honduras and Jamaica, while efforts to this end have been made in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. A "social investment and emergency fund" approach has been instituted in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela. Examples of collaboration in funding can be seen in Argentina and Ecuador (World Bank) and Central America (Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and World Bank). A joint effort with the UNICEF Programme Funding Office to increase funding through National Committees for UNICEF and bilateral donors was also made (e.g., with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Spanish Committee for UNICEF).

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAMMES, EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND OPERATIONS ISSUES

A. Health and nutrition

13. An agreement between the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the United Nations Population Fund, USAID, IDB and UNICEF put in motion the preparation of maternal and child health components (MCH) of the national programmes of action. The interregional fund for programme preparation, promotion and evaluation facilitated this "agreement-to-action" process.

14. A continuing decline in immunopreventable diseases was observed in 1991, particularly with regard to poliomyelitis; only eight cases were reported in the region. Efforts to eliminate measles are under way in Cuba, the English-speaking Caribbean and Brazil. (The elimination of neonatal tetanus and measles are goals of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI), phase II, 1992-1995.)

15. In 1991, a cholera epidemic revealed appalling environmental and sanitation problems affecting vast segments of the population. In Peru, the hardest-hit country, the mobilization of women and the work of community oral rehydration units averted an otherwise far greater catastrophe. Immediate responses included an emergency appeal (still unfunded) and a regional training workshop. Longer-term efforts for the control of diarrhoeal diseases and of cholera are being planned through a regional agreement between the Junior Chamber International, WHO/PAHO and UNICEF.

16. A plan prepared by a regional consultative group aims to promote breast-feeding. Components of the plan include the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes, the UNICEF "baby-friendly" hospital initiative and the UNICEF/WHO "10 steps to successful breast-feeding". Examples of noteworthy efforts can be seen in Mexico, where an agreement has been reached with the baby formula producers to stop free distribution of baby formula as of I January 1992. In addition, important actions are being taken in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela.

B. Child development and basic education

17. A seminar was held in February 1991, focusing on basic education and child development policies and strategies for Latin America and the Caribbean. This activity responded to the framework of action of the World Declaration on Education for All, which states that in 1991 countries were to develop supportive political environments. A set of printed and audiovisual materials was prepared that contributed to the creation of a common language on basic education in the region and promoted intersectoral political and financial support to improve basic education.

18. Moreover, as part of follow-up to the Conference, these materials were widely disseminated by UNESCO and UNICEF during a regional meeting of education ministers in Quito, Ecuador. Discussions regarding an operational agreement between UNESCO and UNICEF, which may include other partners, were initiated during the meeting.

19. The programme review process of the 12 country programmes of cooperation indicated that the new approach and emphasis on basic education have been incorporated and are being applied at the country level. Specific issues that link country and subregional conditions and opportunities were highlighted. Some examples are: integrated health, nutrition and psycho-social interventions for early childhood development (Chile); bilingual education (Bolivia); emphasis on family and better parenting (English-speaking Caribbean); and assistance to the handicapped (Central America).

20. A preliminary version of Facts for Life messages for Latin America, which includes a balanced perspective on health, nutrition and psycho-social development, was designed jointly by the UNICEF Regional Office and the Chile country office. Messages on psycho-social development were shared with all UNICEF offices in the region. These efforts will contribute to the new version of Facts for Life messages being prepared at UNICEF headquarters.

C. Children in especially difficult circumstances

21. The problems of children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) continued to generate wide interest and demands both within and outside the region. A total of 51 technical support missions were carried out.

22. Studies on child prostitution were prepared in nine countries: Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Longer-term planning and monitoring were examined by a task force. As a result, CEDC goals for the current decade were established.

23. A series of materials on methodology and outreach was published in four languages and distributed world-wide.

24. Cooperation agreements with Childhope, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Latin American

Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders and Defence of Children International were established and actions were initiated.

D. Empowerment of women for development

25. Examination of the structural causes of the long-standing problems affecting women continued. Three areas were given special attention: violence against girls and women; women heads of household; and teenage pregnancy.

26. The network of women's offices throughout South and Central America was expanded with the addition of the Caribbean subregion. Staff training on gender, a regional workshop on planning of activities regarding women and an evaluation of cooperation in the region contributed to the girl-child components of the new country programmes. The main issues were incorporated in the regional plan of action for women in the 1990s. Cooperation with the Andean Parliament, IDB, UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women and Radio Nederland led to collaboration in the areas of advocacy and communication.

E. Urban basic services, water supply and sanitation and environment

27. Implementation of urban basic services projects continued with activities aimed at establishing systems, promoting participation of the beneficiaries and using appropriate and low-cost technologies. The new country programmes plan to extend coverage significantly, while integrating these projects with other ongoing projects.

28. During the second half of 1991, a senior staff member responsible for the areas of urban basic services, water supply and sanitation and environment joined the regional team of advisers. A review of policies and strategies and an evaluation of experience in this area were carried out. The establishment of a method to exchange information on experience is planned.

29. Ongoing efforts regarding the environment and water supply and sanitation were examined (in the Amazon basin countries, Central America, Chile and Cuba). Efforts were made to carry out a situation analysis on the problems of women and children in the Amazon. In addition, the basis for collaboration with WHO/PAHO on the application of the water and sanitation monitoring system was established.

F. The Catholic Church

30. Exchanges of experience and cooperation related to child survival and development and CEDC represented a large share of cooperative efforts with the Catholic Church. Important meetings were held with the First Latin American Congress of the Church on Social Doctrine to consolidate child pastorate

activities within the Church. These meetings were combined with field visits to facilitate technical cooperation among developing countries. More than 12 countries were involved in missions to Brazil and Chile. Furthermore, studies on child-rearing practices and patterns are under way in Bolivia, Central America, Chile and Peru.

G. Monitoring and evaluation

31. During February 1991, a UNICEF regional colloquium on methodological, strategic and collaborative approaches to monitoring national programmes of action was held. The resulting plan is being implemented and includes cooperation with ECLAC and UNESCO. The fundamental objective of these efforts is to strengthen national capacity.

32. Important national evaluations (e.g., the analysis of the "Plan médico de la Familia" in Cuba) have been carried out. At the regional level, a mid-term evaluation of the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC) took place in 1991.

H. External relations

33. Significant efforts were made in the region in the elaboration of the national programmes of action by Governments. In addition, follow-up to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit for Children was extensive.

34. "Children of the Americas", a multimedia package (print, radio and television) will be produced periodically starting in 1992, taking advantage of the commemoration in 1992 of the fifth centennial of the encounter of two worlds. This project was planned and designed in collaboration with all regional offices. Funding sources are being explored and a contribution from the Spanish Committee for UNICEF has been pledged.

35. Within the concept of the "third channel" for education, animated films are being produced (in Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador and Jamaica); a popular Central American health radio series completed a pilot programme on cholera (with assistance from Radio Nederland); and a television series for children (Plaza Sesamo IV/Mexico) is in the negotiation stage (supported by the Government of the Netherlands and the United States Committee for UNICEF).

36. The UNICEF Regional Office and the country office in Brazil sponsored the First Latin American Soap Opera Scriptwriters' Workshop, gathering, for the first time ever, the most important authors of the genre. The writers reaffirmed their commitment to increase the number of social messages in soap operas.

I. Operations

37. In order to improve overall management, a workshop was held that involved a wide cross-section of staff, from representatives to General Service staff. In addition, the regional office and country office in Colombia were restructured and the office in Nicaragua became a full country office with a representative.

38. The speed and quality of classification and recruitment of personnel were significantly improved. All staff working in this field were given training in more effective electronic data-processing applications, using a management and information system network.

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PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION

The present document analyses major new trends and developments of UNICEF programme cooperation in the East Asia and Pacific region during 1991.

The UNICEF regional office has responsibilities for UNICEF cooperation in the following countries and Territories: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and the countries in the Pacific region (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu).

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I. REGIONAL OVERVIEW

1. In 1991, regional- and country-level follow-up to the World Summit for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child created a greater awareness of the situation of children and women.

2. On 23 October, a peace agreement ending the 12-year civil war in Cambodia was signed in Paris, giving hope for real peace and development. Following a bloodless coup in February 1991, a new constitution is now under discussion in Thailand and elections have been promised for early in 1992. Apart from these two major political events, Governments have either remained in place or peaceful changes have occurred, providing relatively stable government throughout the region. The situation in Myanmar continues without change. After years of uncertainty, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were admitted as Members of the United Nations in September 1991.

3. As the economies of socialist countries in the region shift from centrally planned to mixed market-oriented systems, more foreign investment is being encouraged through business reform and the deregulation of local markets. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the "New Economic Mechanism" has opened the economy to Thai, Japanese, French and other investors. In Viet Nam, a new foreign investment law has led to the approval of 253 joint ventures worth $1.96 billion.

4. With some exceptions, economic growth in the region has been robust: 10 per cent in Malaysia; 9 per cent in Thailand; 9 per cent in the Republic of Korea; and 5.6 per cent in Indonesia. The overall forecast for economic growth in the region is a buoyant 6.7 per cent, which should give the new industrialized countries fully developed economies by the end of the century.

5. China experienced its worst flooding in 50 years, but still managed a grain output that was the second highest ever. It had a trade surplus of $8 billion by August 1991. One of China's main economic concerns is the disparity of growth between provinces and between rural, urban and remote areas.

6. Inflation appears to be under control in the market economies of the region, but it is posing problems in the socialist economies because of the combined effects of increased oil prices, the global recession and the transition from planned to market economies.

7. Despite the favourable economic climate in most countries of the region, large numbers of families remain below the poverty line. Their numbers have increased in China, the Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Pacific island countries, but have decreased in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. The outlook for the next year is favourable, but with inflation rising continually in the less developed countries, more families are likely to fall below the poverty line.

II. PROGRAMME PROGRESS AND TRENDS

A. Child survival and development priorities

8. Infant mortality rates have declined in all countries, ranging from an annual rate of reduction of 0.5 per cent in Malaysia to 5.7 per cent for Thailand for the decade 1980-1990. Following the achievement of universal child immunization (UCI) in the vast majority of the countries of the region, which has improved the infrastructure for the overall delivery of child survival and development (CSD) services, other health initiatives such as the safe motherhood and "baby-friendly" hospital initiatives are now being advocated.

9. The achievement of UCI has posed some challenges in the region. In Myanmar, as of April 1991, the third dose of combined diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus vaccine (DPT3) and of oral polio vaccine (OPV3) reached 88 per cent coverage, but measles coverage still needs to be increased. In Papua New Guinea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia, there have been serious efforts to achieve UCI despite the many constraints facing those countries. On the other hand, China has achieved 97 per cent coverage for DPT3 and 98 per cent for OPV3. Reviews of the expanded programme on immunization have been conducted in China and Thailand. The weighted average coverage for the region as a whole is 92 per cent for DPT3, 94 per cent for OPV3 and 92 per cent for measles vaccine.

10. Conventional activities of the control of diarrhoeal disease (CDD) programme were pursued in all countries of the region. In addition, in countries such as Indonesia and Viet Nam, the "social marketing" approach (using marketing techniques to transmit messages with a social content) for more effective use of oral rehydration therapy (ORT) was rigorously applied with good results. In Viet Nam, it has been calculated that some 64.4 per cent of the population now use ORT, making that country one of the most successful in implementing the CDD programme. Despite the progress achieved, in some countries there still remains a gap between accessibility and actual use of ORT.

11. Together with diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections (ARI) account for about 50 per cent of deaths among children under five years old in the region. Countries such as Viet Nam, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines have now developed extensive programmes and are working towards national coverage. Thailand, which has been selected for an intensified ARI-control programme, has also been carrying out operational research studies in the use of drugs for ARI to support the national programme.

12. The acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) epidemic continues to spread in many countries of the region, notably in Thailand. According to unofficial estimates, the number of people who have tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in Thailand alone could well reach 1 million by the year 2000. In Myanmar and Malaysia, transmission has been mainly through intravenous drug users. On the positive side, all countries

have taken very serious steps to contain the problem, including the formation of high-level committees, extensive blood testing for HIV, information, education and communication campaigns directed towards high-risk groups, and the provision of counselling services. In Thailand, direct action is now being pursued by the Prime Minister's office and by the Ministry of Health, including monthly donor meetings to mobilize additional resources.

B. Nutrition

13. The rate of protein-energy malnutrition continues to decline in the region. In Thailand, for example, according to the latest available information, the prevalence of moderate and severe protein-energy malnutrition is less than 1 per cent. The regional office has been advocating the use of a comparable standard (weight-for-age) among the countries of the region.

14. In collaboration with the Mahidol University Institute of Nutrition (Bangkok), the International Development Research Centre and the World Health Organization (WHO), a workshop was held to assess community nutrition training needs in Asia. During the second half of 1991 significant advocacy efforts were undertaken to promote breast-feeding and the "baby-friendly" hospital concept, particularly in Thailand and the Philippines.

C. Safe motherhood

15. The safe motherhood concept gained further momentum as a result of regional workshops and seminars supported by country-level advocacy. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Cambodia and Mongolia, the concepts of family health and birth-spacing have begun to be accepted by the Governments concerned.

D. Women in development and the girl child

16. In many countries in the region, women's groups continued to play a leading role in promoting women in development activities. In China, the All China Women's Federation has conducted many skills training courses, which incorporated Facts for Life messages, to support income-generating activities for women cadres. The Lao Women's Union has strengthened the development of a network of women community workers at the local level to promote CSD interventions. The Women's Association of Cambodia has implemented various activities to improve women's living conditions through income-generation, functional literacy and child-care programmes. UNICEF also supported revolving funds for women's income-generating activities in many countries in the region. In Indonesia, UNICEF continued to support the Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (family welfare movement) by strengthening the managerial skills of its subdistrict organizers. In Cambodia, small interest-free loans were given to women to expand or improve ongoing economic activities by setting up small businesses such as arts and crafts and family food production.

17. In general, boys and girls in the region have equal access to primary education. However, among minority ethnic groups, and those located in remote areas in countries such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, China and Viet Nam, girls are less likely than boys to attend school. Problems of early marriage and teenage pregnancy still exist in Myanmar, Indonesia and the Philippines. Girls are more exposed to child abuse.

E. Basic education

18. Increased attention is being given to various aspects of basic and non-formal education, particularly the qualitative aspects, as a follow-up to the World Declaration on Education for All and accompanying framework for action. Overall, there has been an increasing shift towards providing more assistance for training and management and less for equipment. UNICEF assistance contributed to the preparation of the Philippines National Plan of Action for Education for All and to the Cambodian Education for All National Conference. UNICEF has undertaken discussions about assisting education projects for the first time in Malaysia and Papua New Guinea and about increasing its assistance to include activities for improving the quality of basic education in remote areas in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

19. In Cambodia, UNICEF is providing technical assistance to undertake research on causes of wastage in primary schools. In the Philippines, UNICEF projects employ an integrated approach to improve child health and reduce drop-outs from primary school. In Myanmar and Viet Nam, projects to improve learning assessment and the quality of basic education are being pursued. UNICEF activities in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and China addressed training in planning and management to help improve system efficiency. The development of instructional materials and teacher training was assisted in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and China.

20. In Thailand, UNICEF supported the establishment of community learning centres attached to primary schools to provide continuing non-formal learning opportunities for neo-literates. UNICEF also supported an Indonesian non-formal education programme designed to combine literacy acquisition with income-generating activities, especially for women. UNICEF activities in early childhood education continued in most countries of the region. Both Myanmar and Viet Nam, for example, are implementing projects on community-based child-care centres that provide support and training for local mothers to establish and manage day-care centres.

F. Children in especially difficult circumstances

21. In several countries of the region, concerns relating to child workers and child abuse, neglect, abandonment and prostitution are increasingly being recognized as critical social issues. Malaysia, in the wake of a dramatic increase in cases of child abuse and neglect, enacted the 1991 Child Protection Act, which, inter alia, outlines a clear series of child rights.

In Thailand and the Philippines, research findings and technical meetings have brought into focus the problems and needs of children in difficult circumstances and the need for policy and programme action. In several countries, regional networks and support for information exchange encouraged by UNICEF have made important contributions towards policy, legal and programming responses from government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). An active regional NGO supported by UNICEF, Child Workers in Asia, continues to play an important networking and information support role.

G. External relations

22. There were two high points in the regional office's external relations programme in 1991: the organization of the regional consultation on follow-up to the World Summit for Children, held at Bangkok in July; and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) ministerial-level meeting on social development, held at Manila in October. At the former, high-level ministerial delegations from 11 Asian countries reaffirmed their commitment to the Summit goals by submitting work plans for the completion of national programmes of action by the end of 1991. The report of the latter, the "Manila Declaration", contained clear references to the Summit Declaration and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The keynote address of the UNICEF Executive Director at the Manila meeting gave a high profile to the cause of children in the region.

23. In the several rapidly industrializing countries of Asia (Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand), external relations is expanding to include fund-raising and building new alliances among research, education and strategic studies institutions.

24. During 1991, 14 countries in the region had ratified or acceded to the Convention, which is considered a framework for national programmes of action to reach the Summit goals. The Philippines has mobilized advocates and women lawyers to draft ideal legislation for the implementation of the Convention, while Viet Nam, Myanmar and Thailand are assessing the state of their legislation in relation to the Convention. Regional exchanges of experience on issues related to implementation and monitoring of the Convention are receiving increased attention, and regional consultations on these issues are planned for early 1992.

H. Summit follow-up

25. Most countries in the region are in the preliminary stages of preparing national programmes of action, with five countries already well advanced (China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam). In all countries in the region, the programmes are expected to have a positive impact on national policy-making and to become an integral part of development planning.

26. Countries in the region have already established institutions for monitoring the achievement of Summit goals. In China, the National Coordinating Committee for Children and Women plans to hold nationwide progress review meetings every three years to share experiences and information, evaluate progress and recommend further actions. Indonesia has incorporated the goals' indicators into its national socio-economic survey of 100,000 households and into a health survey of 50,000 households. The Republic of Korea will involve local NGOs and universities in monitoring. UNICEF assistance to Malaysia is expected to include cooperation on the monitoring of child welfare goals. Thailand continues with its "basic minimum needs" system to monitor annually conditions in all villages. Viet Nam plans to hold an annual summit for children. Many countries still have to designate a specific government institution to monitor the Summit goals, but some countries have specified the institutions. Indonesia has designated the Minister Coordinator for People's Welfare; Malaysia, the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Office; Thailand, the National Youth Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister; Viet Nam, the Committee for the Protection and Care for Children; and the Philippines, the National Statistical and Coordination Board.

27. All countries in the region have complete data for 1990 for all seven major Summit goals, but only one third have data for the supporting goals. Over one half of the countries in the region stated that the major goals and 12 supporting goals had already been achieved or were achievable, while all were unanimous that all goals have high political appeal. Almost all countries in the region have programmes supporting the seven major goals, and about one half for the 20 supporting goals. Only one third of countries in the region were able to set medium-term targets for the major and supporting goals, but most expected to be able to do so once the national programmes of action had been prepared by end of 1991.

III. REGIONAL SERVICES

A. Planning, evaluation and monitoring services

28. In 1991, the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) provided major support for country programme preparation and for the development of master plans of operations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific island countries.

29. In March 1991, EAPRO organized an "Asia strategy meeting" for Summit follow-up and, in July 1991, a regional consultation on national programmes of action. The consultation, attended by 75 ministerial and official delegates from 11 countries, formally adopted a "Commitment for Action" to prepare national programmes of action by the end of 1991. EAPRO also published technical guidelines on monitoring the goals for children and development in the 1990s and baseline and trend analysis for countries in the region.

B. Health and nutrition advisory support services

30. Regional advisory support services were provided to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, Viet Nam, Malaysia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, the South Pacific island countries, Mongolia and Thailand. The regional adviser also served as a member of United Nations fact-finding missions to Cambodia to assess the immediate needs of the Cambodian people in the fields of health and nutrition. The regional office organized a regional study seminar on primary health care (PHC), a regional workshop on community nutrition and several short study tours to Thailand. In collaboration with the Government of Japan, an evaluation of the PHC project of the Institute for Health Development of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was also undertaken in 1991.

31. The regional adviser also worked with a WHO team in the organization of a joint consultative meeting on programme matters, held at Vientiane on 12 and 13 February 1991. EAPRO was also represented at the WHO Global Advisory Group Meeting on Immunization, held at Antalya, Turkey, from 14 to 18 October.

C. Education advisory services

32. Early in 1991, an all-Asia strategy meeting for basic education was organized to examine strategies for the implementation of Education for All goals. At mid-year, the regional adviser for education was appointed and began a round of country visits to examine education projects, assess needs and plan a programme of support for 1992. A regional training workshop for education programme officers was held in October.

D. Regional personnel, administration and supply operations

33. The regional office provides a broad range of advisory and support services to country offices in the region in the areas of personnel management, training, administrative and financial systems and procedures. Advisory missions visited the Republic of Korea, Myanmar, the Philippines, China and Malaysia. The regional office provided support for supply operations and training in the region and for global procurement valued at $7.4 million in the year from July 1990 to July 1991. Special assistance was also provided for flood emergencies in Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Bangladesh.

E. Inter-agency and regional institutional cooperation

34. During 1991, UNICEF cooperated with ESCAP in many areas, including several inter-agency task forces on Cambodia, rural development, water and sanitation, youth activities, disability prevention and human resources development. It also participated in a forum and inter-agency meeting on women in development. UNICEF cooperated with ESCAP in organizing the

ministerial-level conference on social development, held at Manila in early October 1991. UNICEF and the Asian Development Bank have agreed to establish two annual consultations on health and education priorities in the region, the first to take place at Manila in January 1992.

35. UNICEF and WHO organized a two-day regional director's consultation on problems and programmes for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and jointly participated in several meetings, training courses and consultations. The appointment of an education adviser has formalized more frequent and regular consultations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on issues and programmes of mutual interest.

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PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH ASIA REGION

The present document reports on and analyses major new trends and developments in UNICEF programme cooperation in the South Asia region during 1991.

The UNICEF regional office has responsibility for cooperation in the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

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I. OVERVIEW

1. The overall situation in each of the countries of the South Asia region is reviewed briefly below.

2. The civil war in Afghanistan has not ended, despite the acceptance of the United Nations peace plan by the major Powers. Difficult trading conditions and the lean 1990 harvest have strained the economic situation of both the Government and the people, made worse by an earthquake in the north-east, floods in the south-west and the continuing hostilities.

3. The February elections in Bangladesh, followed by a change from a presidential to a parliamentary form of Government, should help to end the political and civil disturbances that rocked the country in previous years. The economic growth rate dipped slightly in 1990-1991, after the previous upward trend. Since 80 to 90 per cent of public investment depends heavily on external funding, there are limited options for macro-economic management. Meanwhile, the April cyclone killed around 138,000 people and left some 2 million homeless - an ordeal which the population faced with great resilience.

4. During the past year, Bhutan appears to have maintained its decade-long economic growth, but government revenue resources have fallen short of even current expenditures, and well over half of the development outlays are met by external aid, mostly as grants. Civil disturbances in the south affected the people there, including school-age children.

5. Mid-year, India held its second general elections in two years. The economic growth rate has slid from a peak of over 10 per cent two years ago to around half of that. Responding to a serious fiscal deficit and trade imbalance, the Government devalued the currency and considerably deregulated the economy, mainly to attract external loans and investment.

6. In Maldives, the year was politically uneventful. The economic growth trend continued, although somewhat less than in previous years. Additionally, while the fiscal deficit has grown, the negative trade balance has been offset by service receipts and transfers from abroad.

7. Nepal had its first national elections in May, which marked a largely peaceful transition from a partyless panchayat (administrative district) system, modelled after the traditional councils of village elders, to a multi-party democracy. Economic growth has yet to pick up, although the relatively small industrial sector is performing better than the agricultural sector, which is mostly subsistence.

8. In Pakistan, the economy continues to grow at a rate of about 5 per cent, but the proportion of budget deficit financed by external borrowing has also grown to about 39 per cent. Despite rising exports, the balance of payments remains seriously adverse, and the inflation rate is climbing.

9. In Sri Lanka, the ethnic conflict in the north has continued. The tightening of both fiscal and monetary policies which began two years ago, along with currency devaluation, has been maintained, resulting in a reduced budget deficit and improved balance of trade. The related reforms aim at limiting the public sector, opening up the economy to greater competition and restructuring social support schemes.

10. The foregoing notes on the political and economic situation in the countries of South Asia point to certain broad trends - towards more democratic politics and the assertion of subnational identities on the one hand and, on the other, towards a greater reliance on market mechanisms and away from the bureaucratic management of economic activities so as to release the full potential of the economy.

11. In order to ensure that these trends become mutually supportive, that the aroused expectations of the poor are met and that pervasive disparities of many kinds are reduced, the Government and the community must jointly foster and sustain a movement towards equitable social and human development. Such a movement must place the minimal goals for children at the core of the development challenge of the final decade of this century. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is, therefore, uniquely relevant at this stage of South Asia's social development. It has been ratified by all the countries in the region except India, which is expected to do so shortly. Public opinion is persuaded that those rights correspond to the essential needs of the child and the basic duties of the family, community and society.

II. THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

12. To reach the goals of the decade, South Asia has to push harder and travel faster than the other regions. While the region has one quarter of the world's children, it has a much higher share - around two fifths - of all deaths of children under five years of age, as well as of the world's poor, the malnourished and illiterate. Children up to 15 years of age also represent two fifths of South Asia's total population, currently at about 1,150,100. Average population growth rates have been high over the past three decades: 3 per cent in Pakistan; 2.7 per cent in Bangladesh; 2.4 per cent in Nepal; and 2.2 per cent in India. Given the rapid rise in the population of reproductive age that has taken place in recent decades and that will continue for another decade or two, the absolute numbers will increase, even if the growth rate is moderated somewhat during the 1990s. In the meantime, population growth places immense pressure on limited resources to sustain and improve the situation of the people in the area.

13. All eight countries in the region are in the low-income category, with per capita gross national product ranging from $180 in Bangladesh to $430 in Sri Lanka. These and other figures, mentioned below, mask glaring disparities within each country and between geographic areas, economic classes, social groups, urban and rural settlements, males and females. Around 500 million people live in poverty. Infant and under-five mortality rates vary from

26 and 35 per 1,000 live births, respectively, in Sri Lanka, followed by Maldives, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in that order, to 123 and 189 per 1,000 live births, respectively, in Bhutan and Nepal and 167 and 292 per 1,000 live births, respectively, in Afghanistan. Available information on the wasting and stunting of young children presents an equally discouraging profile: 28 and 66 per cent, respectively, in Bangladesh; 19 and 34 per cent in Sri Lanka; 14 and 69 per cent in Nepal; 17 and 42 per cent in Pakistan; and 9 and 51 per cent in India.

14. Among the five larger countries, access to safe drinking water varies from 34 per cent of the rural population in Nepal, 45 per cent in Pakistan, 55 per cent in Sri Lanka and 73 per cent in India to 89 per cent in Bangladesh. Access to rural sanitation facilities, however, is even worse. Adult female literacy rates (15 years old and above) are as low as 14 per cent in Afghanistan, 25 per cent in Bhutan, about 13 per cent in Nepal, 21 per cent in Pakistan, 22 per cent in Bangladesh and 34 per cent in India. A variety of factors, including malnutrition, illiteracy, early marriage, too many births and unceasing work, accounts for some of the highest maternal mortality rates anywhere - estimated at around 460 per 100,000 live births in India, 500 in Pakistan, 600 in Bangladesh, almost 640 in Afghanistan, about 830 in Nepal and about 1,310 in Bhutan, compared with about 330 in Maldives and 80 in Sri Lanka. The magnitude and complexity of the task set for the decade are evident.

III. TOWARDS THE DECADE GOALS

15. In a significant development during 1991, the countries of the region geared their national planning processes to the goals for children and development in the 1990s. Region-wide follow-up of their political commitment to the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action has taken the shape of 10-year national programmes of action - finding a balance between ambition and feasibility, except in the still-evolving political and security environment of Afghanistan. This broadened and determined approach to a cluster of clearly focused, time-bound basic goals is conceived as integral to each country's emerging, or current, national socio-economic development plan. The initiative is being reinforced by the collective political endorsement of successive summits of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) since Bangalore, 1986.

16. In addressing the practical problems of moving towards the goals, development plans must clearly respond to social needs, which will happen only through a social process with the community at its centre, supported by the country's political and professional institutions. This involves an incremental change in the conventional course of development.

17. In translating this awareness into viable strategies and tangible results, UNICEF in South Asia has played a modest but legitimate role through the year, in three parallel ways:

(a) At the country level, programmes of cooperation between the Government and UNICEF were prepared, or refocused, with the specific aim of catalysing accelerated progress towards the common goals. Examples are the India programme approved by the Executive Board in 1991 and the new programmes for Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan coming up in 1992. The ongoing programmes of cooperation in Bangladesh and Maldives are also targeted to the goals of the decade;

(b) Considering the decisive importance of the social strategy adopted by each country for achieving the goals, UNICEF has tried, with significant success, to assist translation into programmatic content of the concepts articulated and the momentum generated by the South Asia consultations on strategies for the 1990s (Agra, 1989) and on indicators for human development (Kathmandu, 1989). This is reflected in each country's increasingly operational emphasis on community organization and action, in concert with intersectoral teams of government functionaries working closely with the community, as a main strategy for effectiveness and sustainability;

(c) Furthermore, in the course of the year, the organizational structure of UNICEF has been reformed to include Bangladesh and Pakistan in the new South Asia region, where the profiles of problems and opportunities for addressing them have much in common.

IV. PROGRAMME TRENDS

18. There are positive signs that some of the major and supportive goals are achievable if present trends continue. For example, in all the countries except Afghanistan, universal child immunization has been fully or nearly achieved; the current emphasis is on sustainable maintenance. Tetanus toxoid immunization of pregnant women is catching up in Sri Lanka and Bhutan, and the elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995 is a clear possibility, as is the eradication of poliomyelitis during the present decade. With accelerated efforts under way, particularly in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, universal access to safe water is within reach. The dracunculiasis (guinea worm disease) present in some countries of the region will also be eradicated before the end of the decade. The planned reduction of deaths and cases of diarrhoea, measles and pneumonia is feasible in view of the technology and infrastructure available for communication, logistics and service delivery. Control of iodine deficiency disorders is under way across the region through salt iodation and, where possible, the use of iodized oil.

19. The momentum gained in child survival, along with enhanced health care facilities at district and community levels, is being used to advance the aim of safe motherhood, including antenatal care, anaemia control during pregnancy, referral of high-risk cases and care at birth. India currently sets an example of a determined thrust in this direction.

20. Another cluster of major and supportive goals calls for an intensive, population-specific, long-term effort that is part of a more comprehensive

approach to basic human needs. These goals include control of protein energy malnutrition, prophylaxis against iron and vitamin A deficiency, basic sanitary facilities, basic education consistent with quality, adult literacy with equal female participation, responsible planning of births and, especially in the context of the SAARC decade programme for the girl child, a set of urgent affirmative actions calculated to end gender discrimination, sometimes starting even before birth.

21. There are notable examples of credible region-specific initiatives in pursuing the goals. For instance, India has formulated ambitious plans for acceleration of basic education for all, coupled with successful district campaigns spearheaded by a carefully organized voluntary effort for full literacy. UNICEF is playing a significant part in these efforts. In Bangladesh, the dramatic improvement in the outreach of primary health care, and of immunization in particular, has created a new confidence and energy to achieve similar long-neglected and much-awaited aims in sanitation, basic education and community-based women's employment. In Pakistan, the disconcerting realization that social indicators are far behind indices of overall economic growth has resulted in placing the goals for children at the centre of an ambitious social action programme which, in turn, will be the main thrust of the eighth five-year plan.

22. The paramount concern at this stage is what can be done so that these bold nationwide ventures succeed and are sustained through and beyond this decade. Will a greater infusion of external funds as well as domestic budgetary allocations guarantee results? Is the strengthening of the service infrastructure now under way sufficient to improve the indicators of human development? Can the social service sector be transformed through an expanded public sector, or contrarily by opening it up to private commercial enterprise? The search for viable strategies must draw upon the development experience of the region and come to grips with the reality of entrenched poverty in each of the countries.

V. PROGRAMME STRATEGIES

23. An understanding of the link between the goals for children and the causes of poverty suggests that increasing the collective and individual human capacity to cope with poverty is the surest way to curb poverty. Demonstrated results in many parts of South Asia show that it is no longer a romantic dream to enable the poor to become the agents of their own basic development. Nor can the survival, protection and development of the child be assured except through the immediate environment and mediation of the family and community.

24. Social processes have to be consciously promoted by transferring the needed power to organized communities and their institutions. In addition, the strategy has to be as broad as warranted by the essential needs of the community and, as perceived by it, including core concerns such as employment and income, environment and over-population. All the Governments in the region accept the validity of this approach. Most of them have incorporated it into a coherent set of strategic guidelines for action, as listed below:

(a) Enhanced priority for the goals in the national planning process and resource mobilization for larger public investment in the social sector and for the goals in particular;

(b) Use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a tool and a norm in support of the goals;

(c) Promotion of stronger linkages within and between sectoral programmes through a team mode of work among different government departments, focused on the community level;

(d) Decentralized approach to development, with goals disaggregated by district and adopted by communities;

(e) Assisting communities to organize and inform themselves, and to work as a group, jointly with the team of government officials, linked to representative institutions of local government;

(f) Interactive processes of communication, linked to education and training, and focused on the goals;

(g) Capacity and commitment of voluntary agencies and professional organizations to be mobilized in support of the goals;

(h) Monitoring methods and mechanisms, from the community level upwards, to keep track of and publicize progress in terms of programme performance and goal-related indicators.

VI. A RENEWED REGIONAL ROLE

25. The long overdue separation of the post of representative to India from that of the regional director, and the formation of a UNICEF region to cover all the countries of the subcontinent, have helped to reaffirm existing functions and set new objectives for the regional role of UNICEF in South Asia. The rationale for a regional office remains as a two-way bridge between headquarters and country offices for professional services, including evaluation, policy guidance and long-term perspectives on development. In addition, opportunities for programme development are being pursued towards the following ends: mutual support among UNICEF country offices; greater use of intellectual and professional capacity available in the region; fostering intercountry networks of expert panels, professional bodies and voluntary groups centred on the goals of the decade; and, through the Governments, assisting their own processes of regional cooperation for children in development - all of which is also a step, albeit a small one, towards the cause of peace in South Asia.